

Photo Interpretation Keys for Southeast Asia and  
Africa South of the Sahara

Purpose:

To provide research tools that will permit more effective and wider utilization of existing and future aerial photography of little-known areas of Southeast Asia and Africa South of the Sahara for intelligence purposes.

Justification:

The value of aerial photography as an intelligence source is limited by the requirement that the photo interpreter must have knowledge of the unique physical and cultural features of the area covered in order to recognize and interpret those features accurately. For the relatively well-known areas of North America and Western Europe, this is not a major problem. For some other areas -- notably the U.S.S.R., China, and Japan -- fairly comprehensive photo interpretation keys exist, having been prepared during and since World War II. For the more remote and little-known areas of Southeast Asia and Africa South of the Sahara, however, no such photo interpretation keys are known to exist, and the number of photo intelligence analysts with the required area knowledge is exceedingly limited. Yet, it is in these areas that "brush-fire" conflicts and international crises may be expected to occur over the next several years, with the attendant necessity of enhanced photo intelligence efforts. The proposed photo interpretation keys would contribute to these efforts by providing research tools that would permit photo interpreters with little "built in" area knowledge to do a more effective job of interpreting aerial photography of these areas.

The photo interpretation keys are required by the Geography Division as a means of identifying, cataloging, and confirming areal differences. The availability of the proposed keys, which will have already resolved questions of areal characteristics, will facilitate the accomplishment of UW and E and E analysis and contribute to the promptness with which regional analysis in general can be accomplished.

Approach:

It is felt that, in general, the physiographic provinces approach used by Aero Service in the Middle East and North Africa keys would be best. Country as well as topical peculiarities could be broken out and treated in separate chapters. In the case of Southeast Asia, one area-wide key

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Approved For Release 2001/08/10 : CIA-RDP63-00314R000100010099-4

should be prepared covering Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, North and South Vietnam, Malaya, Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei, Sarawak, and British North Borneo. In the case of Africa South of the Sahara, four keys would appear to be advisable; the priority order would be east Africa, central Africa, west Africa, and south Africa. Boundaries shown on the attached map of Africa represent tentative approaches and are subject to change in response to interests of the military services, pattern of existing photo coverage, and other considerations.

Possible Contractors:

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